

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
CALIFORNIA REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD
CENTRAL COAST REGION

STAFF REPORT FOR REGULAR MEETING OF JULY 9, 2004

Prepared April 5, 2004

ITEM NUMBER: —

SUBJECT: General Waste Discharge Requirements for Discharges of Fruit and Vegetable Processing Waste, Central Coast Region, Order No. R3-2004-0066

KEY INFORMATION

Discharger:	Various commercial fruit and vegetable processing operations
Location:	Locations throughout the Central Coast Region
Discharge Type:	Fruit and vegetable processing waste discharge to land. Fruit and vegetable processing waste includes, but is not limited to: fruit and vegetable matter, soil, wash water (which may contain cleaning and disinfection chemicals, and pesticides), cooling water (which may contain descalers, and/or anticorrosion chemicals), water softener waste brine, and impacted storm water.
Treatment/Disposal:	Various treatment technologies and disposal methods are available for fruit and vegetable processing waste, including mechanical solids separation, settling, pH neutralization, biological stabilization with aerated ponds and/or constructed wetlands, subsurface soil absorption systems, and recycling. Discharge to surface water is prohibited.

SUMMARY

In order to efficiently and consistently regulate waste discharges from multiple fruit and vegetable operations across the Central Coast region, staff proposes adoption of General Waste Discharge Requirements for Discharges of Fruit and Vegetable Processing Waste, Order No. R3-2004-0066.

DISCUSSION

The Problem – More dischargers, reduced staff, too little time

Recent California budget issues have the Regional Board feeling the effects of budget cuts, hiring freezes, attrition, and permanent loss of positions. To become more efficient, Regional Board staff recently reorganized, resulting in significant increases in workload for staff that have taken on cases from lost positions. Staff intends to utilize

tools such as general waste discharge requirements to increase efficiency.

What are *general waste discharge requirements*?

The California Water Code recognizes that discharges with similar characteristics such as fruit and vegetable processing waste are appropriately regulated under general waste discharge requirements. Both the Regional Board and fruit and vegetable processing industry benefit from adoption of general waste Discharge requirements as they provide regulatory uniformity and streamline the application process. Obtaining coverage under general waste discharge requirements typically requires only a few weeks versus up to five months for individual waste discharge requirements. General waste discharge requirements help reduce the administrative burden of issuing individual fruit and vegetable processing waste discharge requirements.

Why use *general* waste discharge requirements for fruit and vegetable processing waste?

Although fruit and vegetable processing waste may vary slightly from facility to facility, many of the wastewater handling, treatment, and disposal options are similar. Most waste is generated during the growing seasons. The wastewater is characterized by fluctuations in flow and pH, may have high organic material content and increased salts depending on the type and amount of processing, and mineral concentrations may increase due to recycling of water. Nearly all fruit and vegetable processing facilities employ similar treatment and disposal methods: mechanical solids separation, settling, pH neutralization, biological stabilization (often with aerated ponds), subsurface soil absorption systems, and recycling. Because of the similar issues and threat to water quality fruit and vegetable waste is well suited for general waste discharge requirements.

The Solution – General Waste Discharge Requirements for Discharges of Fruit and Vegetable Processing Waste

Regional Board staff proposes adoption of attached Order No. R3-2004-0066, General Waste Discharge Requirements for Discharges of Fruit and Vegetable Processing Waste (General WDRs). The General WDRs were developed by Regional Board staff, composed of water resource control engineers, geologists, and soil scientists. The General WDRs are modeled after site specific WDRs for existing fruit and vegetable processors and the recently adopted General WDRs for Discharges of Winery Waste.

The General WDRs will apply to both new and existing fruit and vegetable processing waste discharges to land. The General WDRs contain a comprehensive collection of requirements, including:

- Discharge Prohibitions,
- Pollutant Source Control Guidelines,
- Design Guidelines,
- Design Specifications,
- Effluent Limitations,
- Groundwater Limitations,
- Operation Specifications,

- Solids Disposal Specifications,
- Recycling Specifications, and
- Nonpoint Source Control Specifications

Monitoring and Reporting Program No. R3-2004-0066 (MRP) is a part of the General WDRs. The MRP is designed to appropriately monitor each discharge's effect on water quality and promote progressive, environmentally safe waste management and water conservation practices. The MRP generally requires regular monitoring of water supply, production, chemical usage, influent, pond monitoring, septic systems, effluent, disposal areas, soil monitoring, and solid waste disposal. Groundwater and disposal area soils monitoring may be required to measure a particular discharge's effect on underlying groundwater. The MRP is flexible and requires different monitoring based on three different facility size categories: less than 50,000 GPD, from 50,000 GPD to 500,000 GPD, and greater than 500,000 GPD. Those facilities having low threat and low organic strength wastewater may also receive reduced monitoring, if deemed appropriate. As is the case with site specific MRPs, the General MRP may be modified by the Executive Officer.

If a fruit and vegetable processing facility manages its wastewater in a manner that protects water quality to the maximum extent practicable, it will be rewarded with less stringent monitoring requirements. For example, if a fruit and vegetable processing facility uses peracetic acid or ozonated water to clean equipment rather than chlorine it may not be required to monitor its effluent for disinfection byproducts associated with chlorine use. If wastewater is treated and disposed in a manner that is protective of underlying groundwater quality, groundwater monitoring would likely not be required.

Obtaining coverage under the proposed General WDRs is a streamlined process. Rather than submitting a Report of Waste Discharge, fruit and vegetable processing facilities seeking coverage must submit a complete *Notice of Intent* (NOI) to *Comply with the Terms of the General Waste Discharge Requirements for Discharges of Fruit and Vegetable Processing Waste* (see Attachment "B"). Regional Board staff will review each NOI and determine a filing fee, if applicable. Discharges deemed appropriate for coverage under

the General WDRs will be authorized in writing by the Executive Officer. Discharges deemed inappropriate may be regulated with individual WDRs. Regional Board staff will provide notice to the Board of each fruit and vegetable processor to be covered under the General WDRs as a regular item with the agenda package.

Currently regulated fruit and vegetable processing facilities will not need coverage under these General WDRs until their existing individual waste discharge requirements are due for renewal.

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT

Each fruit and vegetable processing facility must comply with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act prior to coverage under the General WDRs.

The action to adopt these General WDRs is intended to maintain water quality and ensure compliance with laws and regulations administered by the Regional Board. Pursuant to Sections 15307 and 15321 of the Resources Agency Guidelines, this action is categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality.

COMMENTS

The following parties are affected by or may be interested in the General WDRs. They were sent a copy of the first draft on April 21, 2004 and invited to comment. Written comments are due no later than May 21, 2004.

Regulatory Agencies

- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- Monterey Bay Nat. Marine Sanctuary
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- State Water Resources Control Board
- California Department of Fish and Game
- California Coastal Commission
- California Dept. of Health Services
- Santa Cruz Co. Health Services Agency
- Santa Cruz Co. Plan/Bldg Dept
- San Benito Co. Plan/Bldg Dept.

- San Luis Obispo Co. Health Agency
- San Luis Obispo Co. Plan/Bldg Dept
- Monterey Co. Health Dept.
- Monterey Co. Plan/Bldg Dept
- Santa Barbara Co. Health Dept.
- Santa Barbara Co. Plan/Bldg Dept
- Santa Clara County Health Dept.
- Santa Clara County Plan/Bldg Dept.
- Santa Clara Valley Water District

Fruit and Vegetable Processors

- Capurro & Son Vegetable Packing
- Christopher Ranch
- Coronet Foods
- Costa Family Farms
- D'Arrigo Bros
- Dole Fresh Vegetables
- Dreisbach Enterprises
- Gilroy Foods Process & Cogen
- Gourmet Veg-Paq
- Nature Quality
- Pride of San Juan
- Rider & Sons
- Rogers Foods
- Santa Maria Salads
- United Genetics Seeds Co.

Consultants and Other Organizations

- Axiom Engineers, Lee & Associates
- Bracewell Engineering
- Living Machines
- Norris Associates
- Robinson & Associates

Press

- Monterey County Herald
- Salinas Californian
- San Luis Obispo County Tribune
- Santa Barbara News Press
- Santa Cruz Sentinel

ATTACHMENT

Draft General Waste Discharge Requirements for Discharges of Fruit and Vegetable Processing Waste, Order No. R3-2004-0066